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TO: Secretary of State

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PRIORITY

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PARIS FOR EMBASSY, CINCEUR, THURSTON AND FINN.

I AM SERIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT AT THIS TIME WE ARE STILL WITH-
OUT AGREED TRIPARTITE POSITION DEAL WITH ANOTHER FLAG INCIDENT
BERLIN.

FULLY CONCUR WITH GENERAL HAMLETT'S OCTOBER 22 STATEMENT OUR
POSITION (BERLIN'S 406 TO DEPARTMENT). IN MY VIEW, IT WOULD
BE POLITICALLY DISASTROUS TO HAVE REPETITION INDECISIVE
OCTOBER 6 DEVELOPMENTS. MOREOVER, GIVEN STATED WESTERN
POSITION AND COMMITMENT FOLLOWING FIRST INCIDENT (COMMAND-
ANTS' TALKING PAPER TO ZAKHAROV, BERLIN'S 367 TO DEPARTMENT),
IT SEEMS TO ME WE WOULD SUFFER IRREPARABLE LOSS PRESTIGE
AND FIND MOST DIFFICULT MAINTAIN OUR PRESENT POSITION BERLIN,
VIS-A-VIS BOTH BERLINERS AND SOVIETS, IF WE STOOD ASIDE WHILE
GDR GOONS REHOISTED THEIR FLAGS WITH IMPUNITY, OR WE PRETENDED
WE WERE REALLY DEALING WITH SITUATION BY SELECTING ARBITRARILY
TO BE BROUGHT DOWN SOME NUMBER FLAGS FEWER THAN THOSE
HOISTED. THIS HAPPENED LAST TIME. SOME FLAGS WERE LOWERED,
BUT COMMUNISTS JUST AS QUICKLY REHOISTED THEM. PROBLEM IS
ESSENTIALLY ONE OF PRINCIPLE -- DEMONSTRATING SOVIETS OUR
DETERMINATION MEET PROVOCATIVE CHALLENGE OUR POSITION IN
BERLIN.

GIVEN PRESENT INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CLIMATE AND BERLIN'S

SECRET

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7-11-59, 10:00 A.M., 7 P.M. FROM BOWEN

ASSESSMENT OF WEST BERLIN CAPABILITIES (BERLIN'S 415 TO DEPARTMENT), THERE WOULD SEEM BE NO BETTER TIME THAN PRESENT FOR US TAKE STRONG MEASURES PREVENT COMMUNIST FLOUTING OUR AUTHORITY. AS I SEE IT, THERE PROBABLY HAS BEEN NO TIME IN RECENT PAST, NOR CAN WE COUNT ON MANY OCCASIONS IN FUTURE, WHEN WE WILL BE ABLE DEAL AS EFFECTIVELY AS WE NOW CAN WITH CHALLENGE THIS KIND IN BERLIN, WITHOUT INCURRING SERIOUS RISKS EITHER TO OURSELVES OR CAUSE OF PEACE. IF THERE IS ANY VALIDITY ALLEGED PEACE AIMS USSR, UNLIKELY SOVIETS WOULD NOW TAKE RISKS WAR OR EVEN DRAWING WORLD ATTENTION NEED WESTERN FORCES IN BERLIN.

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IN THIS CONNECTION, CONSIDER IT ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL BERLIN BE GIVEN TRIPARTITELY AGREED INSTRUCTIONS SOONEST TO REPLY QUESTIONS RAISED BY BERLIN POLICE -- SCOPE OF OPERATION; AUTHORIZED WEAPONS AND ALLIED GARRISON SUPPORT (BERLIN'S 415 TO DEPARTMENT). AFRAID IF WE WAIT UNTIL DETAILS FRENCH ALLEGEDLY SEEKING PROVIDED, WE WILL FIND OURSELVES WITHOUT OPERATIONAL PLAN AT MOST CRITICAL MOMENT.

BRIEF.

Note: Read by Mr. Hillenbrand (GER) 6 p.m. 10-26-59 CWO-M

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